



FORUT comments on the Zero Draft of the Political Declaration on NCDs and Mental Health

FORUT welcomes the Zero Draft's commitment to NCDs and mental health, the need for integrated approaches, and recognition of the importance of addressing risk factors such as tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and alcohol use. However, we strongly recommend that the Norwegian government addresses the following issues:

1. We welcome the Zero Draft's acknowledgement of the economic and social impact of NCDs and mental health, including their contribution to poverty and inequities. FORUT also welcomes the emphasis on the importance of a human rights-based approach to health to ensure equitable access to services and care.

FORUT underlines that the human rights-based approach to health and access to care must include mental health.

1. While the Zero Draft reflects several of FORUT's policy asks, FORUT is concerned that there is a lack of protection against the health-harming industries, including the alcohol industry's vested interests. While the tobacco industry is addressed, it does not explicitly mention alcohol or other unhealthy commodity industries. FORUT is also concerned with the call for involvement of 'stakeholders' and 'private sector' without explicitly addressing potential conflicts of interest. Some examples we are concerned about are: *"Acknowledge that all stakeholders share responsibility [...] and the private sector to mobilize all available resources, as appropriate, [...]"*(paragraph 16); *"continue exploring voluntary innovative financing mechanisms and partnerships, including with the private sector, [...]"* (paragraph 41); and *"private sector to strengthen its commitments to prevent and control NCDs and promote mental health"* (paragraph 56).

FORUT reiterates our policy position¹ and asks that policies for NCDs and mental health be protected from the vested interests of health-harmful industries, including their marketing, policy interference and misleading corporate social responsibility.

¹ FORUT Policy Position for the 4th HLM on NCDs. <https://forut.no/resource/foruts-policy-position-for-the-un-high-level-meeting-on-ncds-2025/>



2. In line with the previous point, FORUT is concerned that the Zero Draft does not recognise the commercial determinants of health. Similarly, there is an emphasis on health literacy, which puts the responsibility on individuals and moves away from the need for systemic changes, not only in health systems but also in societies.

While marketing of unhealthy products was noted, **FORUT calls for a broader recognition of the impact of commercial determinants of health on NCDs.**

3. FORUT is also concerned that community participation and community engagement are not mentioned. While civil society's role is acknowledged, the role of communities is neglected. This is problematic as it seems to be buried under the language of 'stakeholders' as a placeholder for participation.

FORUT asks that member states adopt a more inclusive language beyond "stakeholders," that recognises the role of communities.

4. FORUT welcomes the acknowledgement of the importance of the Best Buys. However, FORUT is concerned that there was no recognition of the existing Global Alcohol Action Plan to reduce alcohol harms, and other existing action plans on risk factors for NCDs and mental health.

FORUT calls for the recognition and inclusion of existing action plans for various risk factors, including the Global Alcohol Action Plan among others, in the Political Declaration.